

Message Text

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10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4219

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SUBJ: EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE DISPATCH OF U.S. MARINES TO THAILAND

REF: A) FBIS BK 150045Z MAY 75 B) FBIS BK 150050Z MAY 75

C) FBIS BK 142326Z MAY 75

SUMMARY: REFS REPEAT EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES FROM THE "BANGKOK POST" AND "THE NATION" OF MAY 15 ON THE DISPATCH OF U.S. MARINES TO THAILAND IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT. THESE COMMENTARIES CONSIDER THE U.S. ACTION A VIOLATION OF THAILAND'S SOVEREIGNTY. THEY FAULT THE U.S. FOR FAILING TO RECOGNIZE THE NEW REALITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND U.S.- THAI RELATIONS, AND CALL ON THE RTG TO RESPOND FIRMLY TO THE U.S. ACTION. END SUMMARY.

1) THE MAY 15 EDITORIAL IN "THE NATION" (REF A) TERMS THE DISPATCH OF U.S. MARINES TO UTAPAO AS "AN AUDACIOUS MOVE BY THE U.S. AND A DOWNRIGHT INSULT TO THAI SOVEREIGNTY." A COMMENTARY BY PAISAN SICHARATCHANYA IN THE MAY 15 "BANGKOK POST" SAID THAT BRINGING IN THE U.S. MARINES AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE RTG "CAN ONLY BE REGARDED AS A VIOLATION OF THAI SOVEREIGNTY." (REF B)

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2) THE MAY 15 "BANGKOK POST" EDITORIAL (REF C) SAYS THAT THE U.S. MOVE MAY WELL JEOPARDIZE THE "RATIONAL READJUSTMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES" AS THAILAND IS TURNING AWAY FROM RELIANCE ON AMERICAN COMMITMENTS TOWARDS A MORE BALANCED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SUPERPOWERS. PAISAN'S COMMENTARY ADDS: "IT'S HIGH TIME THAT THE U.S. RECONSIDERED ITS ENTIRE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THAILAND. THE PATTERN OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT HERE HAS BEEN SUCH THAT THE COUNTRY WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE ANY FURTHER INTERVENTION AND EXPLOITATION BY THE U.S. WHICH APPEARS TO BE HAVING DIFFICULTY IN ADJUSTING TO THE CHANGE OF CLIMATE."

3) "THE NATION" FAULTS THE U.S. FOR FAILING TO RECOGNIZE THAILAND'S SENSITIVE POSITION VIS A VIS ITS NEIGHBORS: "WE CAN SHOW SOME UNDERSTANDING TO THE AMERICANS OVER THE SEIZURE OF THE FREIGHTER BUT WHY DIDN'T THE AMERICANS SHOW AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PECULIAR SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE POLITICAL MAP OF THIS AREA HAS CHANGED DURING THE PAST ONE MONTH AND ALMOST ALL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD ARE TRYING TO MAKE READJUSTMENTS WITH THE NEW REALITIES-- PARTICULARLY THAILAND WHICH HAS COMMON BORDERS WITH THE INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES. IT IS IN THIS CRITICAL PERIOD THAT THE U.S. HAS SOUGHT TO COMPROMISE THAILAND IN THE EYES OF ITS INDOCHINA NEIGHBORS." THE "POST" ADDS: "THE COMING OF THE U.S. MARINES TO SATTAHIP CAN BE CONSIDERED A 'PROVACATIVE' ACT ON THE PART OF THAILAND AGAINST CAMBODIA, AND THIS IS WHAT WE WANT TO AVOID."

4) THE "POST" ALSO LOOKS AT THE U.S. ACTION IN RELATION TO OUR WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA: "THE WHOLE TROUBLE IS THAT WHEN THE AMERICANS HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THEIR PURPOSE WITH REGARD TO THE MAYAGUEZ THEY WILL DEPART--THE WAY THEY HAVE DEPARTED FROM CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM--AND LEAVE THE LOCAL PEOPLE TO THEIR FATE."

5) PAISAN'S COMMENTARY SAYS: "WE FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT WHEN MR. MASTERS TOLD THE THAI PREMIER YESTERDAY THAT HE WAS PERSONALLY UNAWARE OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE MARINES.(SIC) AS THE HIGHEST-RANKING U.S. DIPLOMAT IN THIS COUNTRY AT THE TIME, HE CANNOT DISCLAIM RESPONSIBILITY OVER THE ISSUE." "THE NATION" SAYS THAT THE RTG DEMARCHE TO THE U.S. EMBASSY IS NOT SUFFICIENT: "THE LEAST WE COULD DO TO SAVE OUR FACE AFTER THIS INCIDENT IS TO PREVENT THE NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE CHARLES WHITEHOUSE FROM PRESENTING HIS UNCLASSIFIED

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CREDENTIALS."

6) PAISAN COMMENTS THAT "IN ACTUAL PRACTICE, IT APPEARS THAT THE THAI BASE COMMANDER--A ROYAL THAI NAVY CAPTAIN--TAKES CARE OF SECURITY WHILE THE U.S. BASE COMMANDER CLAIMS FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MOVEMENT OF PLANES AND MEN. THIS CAN MEAN THE AMERICANS ARE INDEED RUNNING THE SHOW." HE CALLS FOR NEW STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THE THAI SIDE HAS THE FINAL SAY OVER THE RUNNING OF THE BASES,

PARTICULARLY UTAPAO. THE "POST" EDITORIAL CONCLUDES: "THE MARINES
MUST LEAVE THAILAND--NOW*"
WHITEHOUSE

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